# Good Stories of the Business World

## THE BOOKKEEPER'S VACATION

### By Paul Crandall

Once upon a time there was—and for that matter, there is today— a bookkeeper who gratified his literary ambition by writing a story upon each of his summer vacations. Last year he gained a wife through this pro-clivity; this summer he acquired a dog cart, and here is the way of it:

"I think," said the Literary Bookkeeper to his wife, as he began sharpening his pen-cil on the morning after their arrival in the country; "I think that I will write the story of George Hillyer and Edith Galland."

"A good idea," said his wife, "for I've certainly got to have a new dogcart. Only"—she continued with emphasis—"don't for heaven's sake say anything about Miss Gal-land's daughter."

But the Literary Bookkeeper made no re-ply, for he thought that that would be like telling a fish story and leaving out the fish.

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NOW Hillyer and Miss Galland intro-duced themselves to each other dur-ing a thunder storm, and this is pos-sibly the reason that Hillyer received such a shock when he learned of Miss Gal-land's daughter.

On the morning of that fateful day of the storm Hillyer strode out of the Mountain house, chagrined at the thought that he had gained no helpful idea for his new story from the people summering up there in the Catskills, and then, away from the beaten paths, he walked away his disappointment, became lost in the maze of fir, cedar and silver pine of North mountain, and, follow-ing the example of a former philosopher of these wilds, he lay down in the cool shadow of an overhanging cliff and went to sleep.

But Hillyer's awakening was distinctly dif-ferent from that of Rip's.

"Your pardon," a far away voice was saying—"I really beg your pardon,"—this time close to his ear—"but you must hurry out of this, else you will become drenched,"

Hillyer opened his eyes and looked up.

The first big drops of a coming thunder shower spattered in his face as the young woman who knelt down to awaken him rose to her feet.

"Extremely kind of you, I'm sure," said Hillyer as he got up and rubbed his eyes; "but as there is no shelter about here, I am booked for a drenching, whether or no." (The lady wore a mackintosh.)

"Not at all, if you hurry to my workshop up there," she replied, pointing to a square building on the cliff, made of cedar logs. "I happened to look out of the doorway when you lay down to take your nap," she ex-plained.

The rain came down in torrents as they entered the door.

Hillyer's eyes took in the room at a glance. It was about thirty feet square; the north side mostly window. An easel with a can-vas upon it stood near the center of the floor; alongside it a table covered with paint tubes and brushes in orderly array; three chairs and a full length mirror—behold the "workshop!"

The young woman drew up two chairs near the doorway and, seating herself upon one, motioned to Hillyer to take the other. With-out speaking they watched together the pass-ing of the storm, and as the sun came out again and brightened up the studio, Hillyer pointed to the canvas and said: "I see that you are a painter; may I look at the pic-ture?"

"Assuredly," she responded, rising and leading the way to the painting.

"The only portion that is finished," she explained as Hillyer came and stood beside her, "is the face of the little girl; the wom-an in the foreground I am finding rather difficult."

What Hillyer saw was a woman standing before an open fireplace, idly picking apart a bunch of red roses and tossing them into the fire; a portrait of a beautiful little girl above the mantelpiece, smiling down upon the pale face of the woman, who lovingly but sorrowfully looked up at the child.

Hillyer was stirred at a depth of feeling so strongly expressed.

"May I ask its name?" he queried finally.

"Some pictures are best nameless," she suggested.

"Perhaps," he said thoughtfully. "But at all events it is best that some people have names; mine is Hillyer."

"Not the Hillyer who wrote 'The Woman-Who-Kept-the-Books?'"

"I can't help it, madam; one must live," he answered.

She laughed delightedly and, reaching over to the table, picked up an envelope and handed it to him.

He read:

"Miss Edith Galland,
"League Ateliers, E. 33d Street,
"Studio 37. New York.'

"And you are Miss Galland, the portrait painter?" he asked.

"It's too true," she answered smilingly as she held out her hand.

"Mr. Hillyer," she went on with light in-sonciance, "I've read your stories, but I'm not going to swell your already good opinion of yourself by telling you what I think of them."

"Miss Galland," he retorted, "I've seen at least a dozen of your paintings, but I'll not have the sin on my soul of increasing your vanity by telling you what I think of them."

"Who told you that I am vain?" she de-manded.

"That," replied Hillyer, pointing over to the mirror reaching six feet from the floor up.

"Come to the glass and retract," said Miss Galland, leading the way.

What appeared to be a mirror Hillyer found was in reality a painting of that por-tion of the studio which stood directly in front of it—the easel, the table, the light shining through the north window, the branches of a tree outside, all were faithfully reproduced, and, to make the illusion more deceptive, the painting was covered with glass.

"Your theory regarding vanity," said Miss Galland, noting the changing expressions of Hillyer's face; "does it hold good?"

"No," he replied, "I renounce it; for I now have a steadfast belief that you are a genius and a sorceress."

"A most unhappy belief," said Miss Gal-land laughingly as she took hold of one side of the heavy frame and pulled it towards her. The picture swung out from the wall like a door, revealing a genuine mirror set in the panel back of it, from which gleamed the bright reflection of the spirit of mischief looking quaintly up at Hillyer out of the cor-ners of her eyes.

Hillyer bowed low before her and quoted:

"like those panels
Of doors and altar pieces the old monks
Painted in convents, with religious symbols
On the outside, and on the inside Venus."

"And a most unhappy quotation," said Miss Galland, her smile vanishing and her face paling visibly.

II

"Dear old boy," said the Literary Book-keeper's wife, coming in, radiant from her morning drive, and patting her husband on the back; "dear old boy, are you making it good for a dog cart?"

"This story is good for a dog cart and harness, little girl!" the Literary Book-keeper answered cheerfully.

"Let's see," said his wife, reaching for the manuscript.

"Positively no," replied the Literary Book-keeper, turning the pages over so that they could not be read. "You must wait until it is printed."

Edith Galland was a successful artist from the day she finished studying under Mc-Wissler. Her first picture, "The President of France," won a prize in the salon of that year, 1898, and when she returned to New York a month after she became the vogue with the members of that set, smart of other-wise, who have money to burn, and burn it.

"The secret of my howling success," she one day confided to her mother, "is that I do not paint people as they are, but as they ought to be."

Pudgy old dowagers with snub noses be-came la grande dame under the magic of her brush. The gross face of Mrs. New, wife of that financial pirate, Col. New, became so almost human when put "as it ought to be" on Miss Galland's canvas, that the colonel insisted on adding a thousand dollars to the figure agreed upon.

"Some day," Miss Galland would say, "some day I'll stop painting ideals for other people and paint a few for myself; for there is more rejoicing over one effort that springs from the heart than over ninety and nine that are made under compulsion."

And so when summer came she hired a cottage on the outskirts of the village of Catskill, installed her mother and others of her family in it, and bright and early each morning went up the mountain to her work-shop, where, free from interruption, the "ef-forts that sprang straight from her heart" materialized out of the wealth of her imag-ination into gems of passionate beauty and pathos.

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Now there must be something soporific about this side of Rip Van Winkle's moun-tain, for when Hillyer upon the seventh, as well as upon all the intervening mornings following the storm, walked over to the studio, it was Miss Galland who slept this time, her head resting upon her arm, just outside the doorway in the shadow of a sweet smelling fir.

"There is a time and place for every-thing," Hillyer thought as he seated himself ten feet away, "and this is the time and place for me to work at my story."

He drew the manuscript from his pocket, and—looked at Miss Galland.

For a few minutes he studied the sleeper's face, with its slightly aquiline nose, firm chin, and full lips just parted enough to af-ford a glimpse of the white teeth beneath, and then he turned to his work and soon be-came absorbed in it.

But it was not long before he threw his paper and pencil aside and, looking stead-fastly at the sleeper's eyes, willed that they open.

And they did open.

"Why, hello," said Miss Galland as she propped herself up on one elbow; "when did you come?"

"Just now, Miss Van Winkle," he re-plied, going over and sitting down beside her.

"I was sleepy from sitting up most of the night with a little girl who was ill," she ex-plained. "Were you working at your new story?" she asked, pointing to the manu-script.

"Yes," he replied brazenly.

"What is the name of the story?" she queried.

"Some stories, like pictures, are best name-less," he responded.

"O, I say, that's not fair," said Miss Gal-land laughingly. "Besides," she went on, "I let you see my picture," and she held out her hand for the manuscript.

"On one condition," said Hillyer, "and that is that you read it to me; for I can never judge whether my work is going right until I find some friend willing to sacrifice himself to the extent of reading it alound to me. And now," he continued as he handed the manuscript over to her, "I expect you to make some valuable suggestions as you go along."

Miss Galland placed her hand upon her heart and bowed as low before him as her sitting position would allow.

"Ladies and gentlemen," began Miss Gal-land, addressing an imaginary audience, as she bent the creases out of the folded leaves; "ladies and gentlemen, I have the unique honor of reading to you an as yet unpub-lished story from the pen of our favorite writer, Mr. George Hillyer. Kindly do not hesitate to interrupt the reader at any point should a suggestion for the betterment of the tale occur to you, for the author tells me that for the first time in his career he does not feel quite sure of himself."

"Excuse me," said Hillyer warmly, "I said nothing of the kind."

"Your remarks, not being in the nature of a suggestion," said Miss Galland, "are out of order, and you will kindly keep quiet.

"This new story of Mr. Hillyer's," she continued as she looked at the manuscript, "is entitled 'A Seven Day Courtship,'—sure-ly an interesting title," commented the read-er—"and begins as follows:

"'From the first I seem to have had a premonition that in this girl I have met my fate; for although I have only known her a week, I find myself for the first time in love—in deadly earnest.

"'Is there such a thing in reality as the communion of souls? Sweetheart, sleeping there under the fir tree, I will that you open your eyes and know that I love you.'"

Miss Galland turned the leaf over—the next page was blank, and the next also—she had read all that had been written of the story of "A Seven Day Courtship," and the knowledge that she had been reading to Hill-yer his confession of love for her overcame her like a flood as she bowed her head and tried to quiet the throbbing of her heart.

"Edith," said Hillyer as he put his arm around her and held her close, "it is for you to say whether the 'Seven Day Courtship' ends happily or miserably for me. Which is it to be?"

"No! No!" she exclaimed; "it lies en-tirely with you. You are entirely ignorant of my—my disposition!"

"Stop," cried Hillyer as he turned her head around until she faced him; "stop; for I would love you even if you kept books yourself!"

From this statement Edith inferred that Hillyer was not exactly in love with the feminine invaders of his profession, and she laughed long and heartily at such an oddly expressed protestation of affection.

But just here Hillyer bethought himself of an engagement to meet the junior mem-ber of the firm—who was also his friend—in New York that evening, and, telling Edith that he would go over to the Mountain house and endeavor to effect an adjourn-ment by phone, he hastily tore himself away.

"I will come down to your cottage in Catskill at 5 o'clock this afternoon," he called out as he gayly climbed the mountain path; "be sure you're home by that time."

He stopped and turned around for her reply.

Edith, standing in the sunlit path, kissed first one hand, then the other, and, putting her outstretched palms under her chin, softly blew the kiss up the mountainside to Hillyer.

Upon which—O, the foolishness of man-kind!—he came running back.

III.

When the Literary Bookkeeper had writ-ten this much of his story the clock struck 11, and he put the manuscript in a large en-velope, securely sealing it by its gummed flap, while his wife looked on.

"What a bright old boy it is," she said, coming over and slipping her arm through his, "to begin a story in the morning and have it ready to send away the same night."

"No," she replied, her eyes taking upon themselves a rather quizical expression.

"What a subtle fellow to have such a guileless wife."

"Doubtless Eve said that to Adam," com-mented the Literary Bookkeeper.

Along about 4 o'clock that afternoon Hill-yer rode down from the Mountain house and went over to Miss Galland's cottage on the corner of a quiet street at the edge of the village.

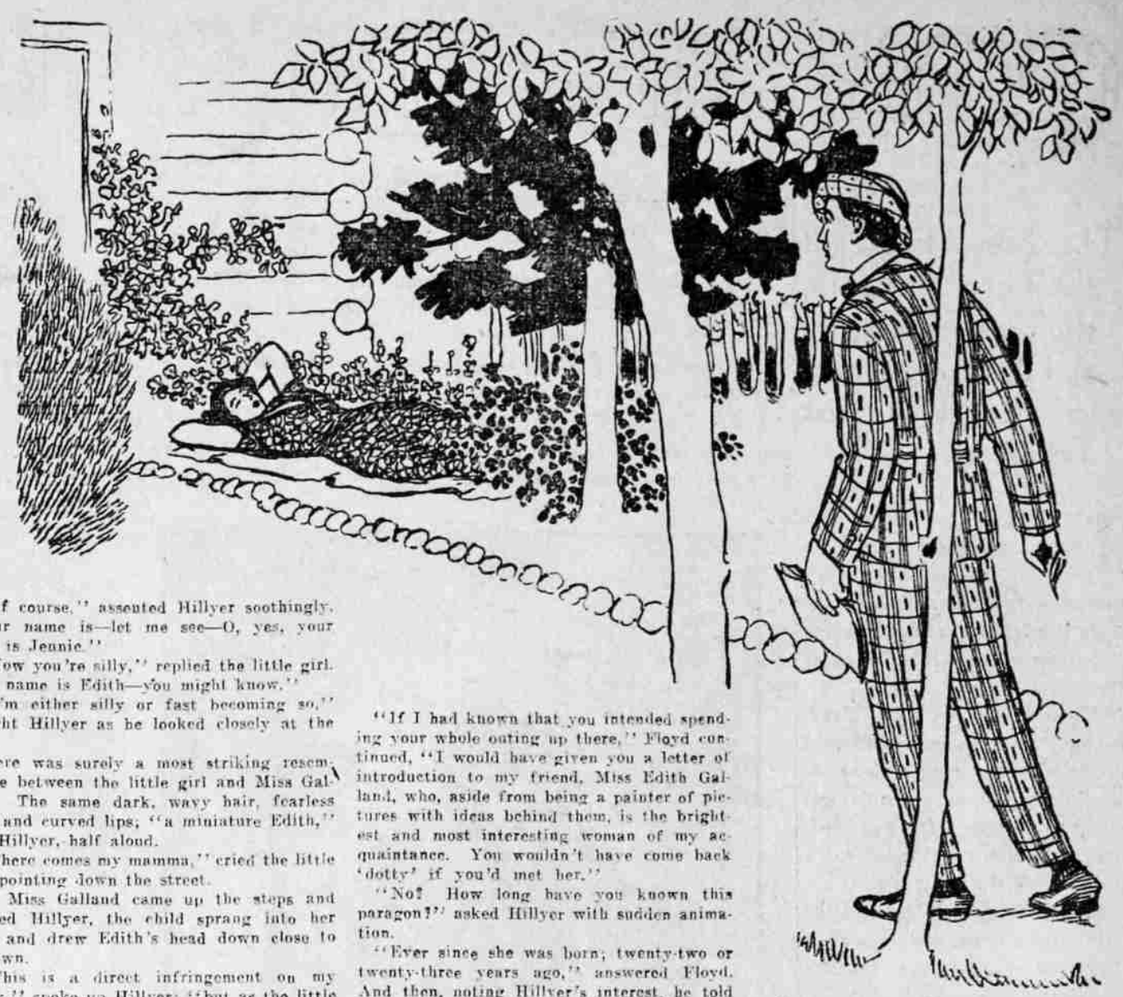
No one seemed to be about but a pretty little girl 3 or 4 years of age, who was grave-ly swinging her doll to sleep in a hammock.

"Hello, little girl," said Hillyer; "does Miss Galland live here?"

"Yes," she answered; "shes gone to the postoffice; don't you 'sturb my dollie!" she continued as Hillyer seated himself near the hammock.

"Not for the world, my dear young lady," said Hillyer reassuringly. "Now," he con-tinued, "I guess you are Miss Galland's little sister."

"I guess not," replied this 4-year-old twentieth century child. "I'm her little girl, I am; don't be too funny."



"Of course," assented Hillyer soothingly. "Your name is—let me see—O, yes, your name is Jennie."

"Now you're silly," replied the little girl. "My name is Edith—you might know."

"I'm either silly or fast becoming so," thought Hillyer as he looked closely at the child.

There was surely a most striking resem-blance between the little girl and Miss Gal-land. The same dark, wavy hair, fearless eyes, and curved lips; "a miniature Edith," said Hillyer, half aloud.

"There comes my mamma," cried the little girl, pointing down the street.

As Miss Galland came up the steps and greeted Hillyer, the child sprang into her arms and drew Edith's head down close to her own.

"This is a direct infringement on my rights," spoke up Hillyer; "but as the little girl flatters me by evincing such good taste, I suppose I can ignore it."

"My nice mamma," said the little girl, looking up and patting Miss Galland's cheek.

Miss Galand flushed and set the child down upon its feet, saying, "Run in the house now, sweetheart; I want to talk to this gentleman for a few minutes."

But when they were alone Miss Galland showed no desire to "talk to the gentleman," for she sat, pale and distraught, looking down the quiet street.

The silence soon became unbearable to Hill-yer, and he ended it by going over to Miss Galland's side and saying quietly:

"Edith, if you are troubled, to whom else should you come but me? You can always be sure of my sympathy, no matter what!"

"No matter what?" she echoed faintly, as she looked down at his feet.

"Yes, just that, without any reservation whatsoever," he replied.

"You are a most generous hearted man," said Miss Galland as she stood up and looked Hillyer in the face; "but I'll not allow your heart to overcome your better judgment. No," she went on, as Hillyer made a ges-ture of dissent, "I insist. My vacation is ended; I and my household are to return to New York tomorrow. Think it over, and then, if you choose, come up to my studio on Thirty-third street."

"I can't argue the matter," replied Hill-yer regretfully, "as my friend answered my message by saying that he must positively see me this evening, and I shall have to hurry to catch the 5:30 train. Good-bye, Edith; hang it, how can I say good-bye in such a public place? But I'll make up for it tomorrow night."

Just the faintest of smiles lit up Miss Gal-land's face as she took the outstretched hand, and in another instant Hillyer was gone.

"O c'est infame," cried Edith hysterically as she entered the cottage door.

"Why, Edith, dear," exclaimed the mother, meeting her in the hallway, "are you laughing or crying?"

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"I say, George," said MacBranty Floyd, Hillyer's friend, the junior member of "the firm," as they sat together in the office that evening, "in heaven's name, man, what is the matter with you? I've put in a solid hour explaining this beautiful scheme of mine, and you are about as appreciative as a wooden Indian. I never knew you to have the blue devils before; did you acquire them in the Catskills?"

"I'm afraid so, Mac," replied Hillyer gloomily.

"If I had known that you intended spend-ing your whole outing up there," Floyd con-tinued, "I would have given you a letter of introduction to my friend, Miss Edith Gal-land, who, aside from being a painter of pic-tures with ideas behind them, is the bright-est and most interesting woman of my ac-quaintance. You wouldn't have come back 'dotty' if you'd met her."

"No? How long have you known this paragon?" asked Hillyer with sudden anima-tion.

"Ever since she was born; twenty-two or twenty-three years ago," answered Floyd. And then, noting Hillyer's interest, he told in detail the story of one girl whose com-pelling force of character changed the desert of adversity into a garden which blossomed as the rose.

"But she is not a paragon, to use your expression," said Floyd in conclusion, "for, as both her mother and I know to our sor-row, she delights in audaciously leading even her best friends into the most illogical pit-falls and then laughing at them."

"By heaveus!" cried Hillyer, starting up, "but she'll not laugh at me!"

"What?" exclaimed Floyd; "you've met her? And this, then, is the explanation of your state of mind?"

And so it came to pass that Hillyer told him all.

It was 9 o'clock on the following evening when Hillyer called at the studio on Thirty-third street and was ushered in by a little serving maid.

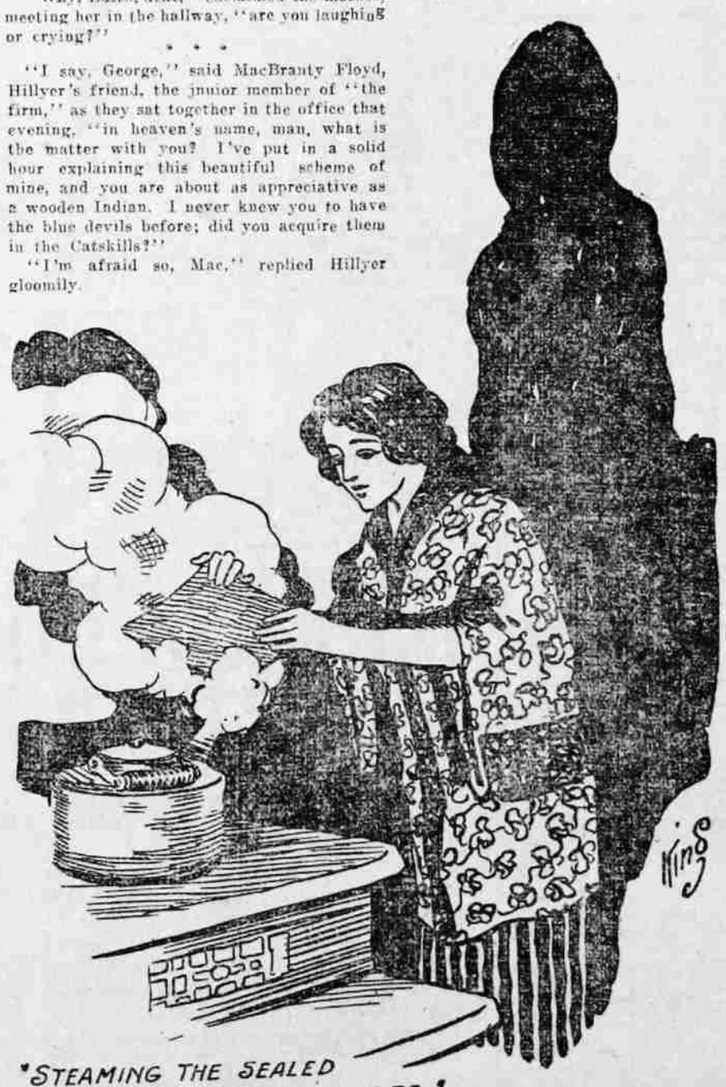
Miss Galland, sitting at a table at the fur-ther end of the room, tried to look as if she were reading a large book which she held in her lap; but when Hillyer, disregarding the invitation, expressed by a motion of her hand, to come over and sit beside her, went instead around to the back of her chair and, looking over her shoulder, saw that the book was merely an old gazeteer, and furthermore saw that Edith was intensely interested in the title page, he knew that she was not so much at her ease as she would have it ap-pear.

"You told me," said Hillyer coldly, ad-dressing the back of Miss Galland's head, "you told me to think it over, and then, if I chose, to come up here."

The heavy book slipped unheeded from Edith's lap to the floor.

"You didn't want my heart to overcome my better judgment; I've concluded not to let it do so!"

Making a little inarticulate cry, Edith sprang from her chair and tried to run past Hillyer into the adjoining room; but he caught her in his arms and held her fast.



"STEAMING THE SEALED FLAP OF A LARGE ENVELOPE."



"THIS IS THE TIME AND PLACE FOR ME TO WORK AT MY STORY."

"O, but you've got to hear me out," said Hillyer. "My heart and my best judgment having united in declaring themselves as being unable to do without you, why, I've come up here to tell you so."

"You had a most enticing way of begin-ning the telling, you wicked fellow," Edith replied, softly crying down Hillyer's immac-ulate shirt front.

Hillyer took her by the shoulders and held her off at arms' length.

"Edith Galland," he exclaimed, "if my friend MacBranty Floyd had not chanced to tell me of your dead sister's child, little Edith; how the accident which caused the death of your sister and her husband also made the little girl unconscious for days, and that upon the child's recovery she thought that you were her mother, still thinks so—you not having the heart to dissuade her—if, I say, Floyd had not told me this, I would still be in all the misery into which your silence plunged me yesterday."

Edith's tearful eyes prevented Hillyer from going any further into his grievance, and he again took her into his arms, feeling as if the offense were his own instead of Edith's.

"I had not realized the hideousness of this thing until now," said Miss Galland as she hid her face on Hillyer's shoulder. "Name the price of your forgiveness and I will pay it."

"O, if it's a matter of price," replied Hillyer, "my terms are that you marry me within a month."

"Easy terms, except as to the wedding," said Miss Galland. "Dear old boy, can't we put that off until spring?"

"There's to be no haggling over the price, Edith Galland," Hillyer replied warningly. "Come, you gave me your word."

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"Well, I've finished the story and mailed it," the Literary Bookkeeper announced next day at the dinner table.

"Good," said his wife, approvingly, "and if the concluding section is as well done as the first two, it will make a hit."

"What do you know of the first two parts?" inquired the Literary Bookkeeper; "you didn't see them."

"No? But I did, you old silly," she re-plied. "If you had been up at 4 o'clock this morning you'd have discovered me steaming the sealed flap of a large envelope over the teakettle," and she laughed at the success of her artful scheming.

Now the Literary Bookkeeper could af-ford to, and did, laugh, with his wife, be-cause the story which she had untimely steamed from its manila safeguard was not the one which you have just read, but a re-vised version, got up for her special early morning clandestine perusal, with both these "asides" and the "daughter" left out.

"Perhaps," said the Literary Bookkeepers wife, somewhat taken aback by the sincerity of her husbands laughter, "perhaps you rung my—I mean Miss Galland's—daughter in on the scene in the last act. But it doesn't matter, for our friends will not recognize me under the name of Edith Galland; will they, do you think, you villainous old boy?"

"Mrs. Hillyer," the Literary Bookkeeper answered cheerfully, if inconsequentlly, (?), "I always hope for the best!"